



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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November 9, 2007

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich  
*Wendy L. Watanabe*  
FROM: J. Tyler McCauley *FOR*  
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – TOUCH A LIFE  
FOUNDATION, TOUCH A LIFE I AND TOUCH A LIFE II GROUP  
HOMES**

We have completed a review of Touch A Life I and Touch A Life II Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by Touch A Life Foundation. Each Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Touch A Life I and Touch A Life II Group Homes are each six-bed facilities, which provide care for boys ages 12-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Touch A Life I Group Home was providing services for two Probation children. Touch A Life II Group Home was providing services for five Probation children.

Touch A Life I Group Home is located in the Second District. Touch A Life II Group Home is located in the First District.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

### **Scope of Review**

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

### **Summary of Findings**

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. The Agency needs to address several deficient areas.

Both Group Homes need to landscape the back yard, clean, repair or replace items throughout the home. Both group Homes also need to encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Touch A Life I Group Home needs to include the placement workers as part of the treatment team in the development implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.

Touch A Life II Group Home needs to maintain current Needs and Services Plans for all children and provide children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:DC:CC:gfw

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer  
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS  
Susan Kerr, Chief Deputy Director, DCFS  
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer  
Ottie Wade, Executive Director, Touch A Life Foundation  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**Touch A Life Foundation  
Touch A Life I Group Home  
Los Angeles, California 90043  
License Number: 191803623  
Rate Classification Level: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Comments:**

Touch A Life I Group Home is located in a residential community. Overall, the exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front yard is clean and adequately landscaped. However, the back yard is not landscaped and there is writing on the back yard fence.

The interior of the Group Home is not well maintained. The kitchen stove, cabinets, drawers and bathroom floor are dirty. The kitchen floor is worn. The stove door, dining room chairs and living room sofa is damaged. There is adequate lighting in the Group Home.

Generally, children's bedrooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate lighting and storage space. Window coverings are in good repair. The beds all have a full complement of linens. However, the dressers are damaged and there is writing on the drawers and a lamp shade. In bedroom three, a mattress is damaged and a window screen is missing. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. However, the weight bench is broken. There are board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

**Recommendations**

**1. Touch A Life management:**

- a. Landscape the back yard.**
- b. Remove the writing from the back yard fence.**
- c. Repair or replace the kitchen floor and dining chairs.**

- d. Repair the stove door.
- e. Repair the living room sofas.
- f. Clean the stove, kitchen cabinets and drawers.
- g. Clean the floor in bathroom one.
- h. Repair or replace the bedroom dressers and lamp shade.
- i. Replace the mattress and window screen in bedroom three.
- j. Repair or replace the weight bench.

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

### **Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals and input from the child. However, the Group Home does not include the placement workers as part of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the NSPs.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

### **Recommendation**

2. Touch A Life management include placement workers as part of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.

## **III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school.

The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**IV. Recreation and Activities**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**V. Psychotropic Medication**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

**Comments:**

According to the Agency's management, there are currently no children taking psychotropic medications. This information is appropriately documented.

Children are aware of their right to refuse medication.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VI. Personal Rights****Method of assessment – Interviews with children**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail and have private visitors. Children attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VII. Clothing and Allowance****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. However, children are not encouraged or assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

**Recommendation**

- 3. Touch A Life management encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.**



**Touch A Life Foundation  
Touch A Life II Group Home  
Pomona, California 91767  
License Number: 191500237  
Rate Classification Level: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Comments:**

Touch A Life II Group Home is located in a residential community. Overall, the exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front yard is clean and adequately landscaped. However, the back yard is not landscaped.

Generally, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the kitchen stove is dirty and the den carpet is torn. In the bathroom, the bathtub surface is damaged and the shower faucet knob is missing.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. However, the dressers in bedrooms one and three are damaged. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

**Recommendations**

**1. Touch A Life management:**

- a. Landscape the back yard.**
- b. Clean the kitchen stove.**
- c. Repair or replace the carpet in the den.**
- d. Repair or replace the bathtub.**

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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES*

- e. Replace the shower faucet knob.
- f. Replace the dressers in bedrooms one and three.

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

### **Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are comprehensive and include short and long term goals. However, the NSPs for one child are not current.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

### **Recommendation**

- 2. Touch A Life management maintain current Needs and Services Plans for all children.

## **III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

### **Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills.

Children are not provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

### **Recommendation**

3. Touch A Life management provide age-appropriate children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs.

## **IV. Recreation and Activities**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

### **Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **V. Psychotropic Medication**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

**Comments:**

According to the Agency's management, there are currently no children taking psychotropic medications. This information is appropriately documented.

Children are aware of their right to refuse medication.

### **Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **VI. Personal Rights**

**Method of assessment – Interviews with children**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail and have private visitors. Children attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VII. Clothing and Allowance****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. However, children are not encouraged or assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

**Recommendation**

4. Touch A Life management encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

**Touch A Life Foundation  
Touch A Life I Group Home  
Los Angeles, CA  
License Number: 191803623  
RCL: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**1. Touch A Life management:**

- a. Landscape the backyard**  
Current status -- Not implemented, but the gardener will fertilize and seed the lawn by October 31, 2007.
- b. Remove the writing from the backyard fence**  
Current status - Implemented. Backyard fence was re-painted. The backyard fence will be checked routinely for graffiti by the facility manager.
- c. Replace the kitchen floor and the dining chairs**  
Current status -- Implemented. The kitchen floor has been replaced with ceramic tiles. More repairs are being done currently and anticipated date of completion October 31, 2007. Three dining chairs have been replaced.
- d. Repair the stove broiler door.**  
Current status -- Implemented. The broiler door was reattached.
- e. Repair or replace the living room sofas.**  
Current status -- Implemented. The upholstery was patched with same color fabric. Repairs will be continually done as needed.
- f. Clean the stove, kitchen cabinets and drawers.**  
Current status -- Implemented. The stove, kitchen cabinets and drawers were thoroughly cleaned by maintenance staff. The facility manager will check on a regular basis to ensure that these items remain clean.
- g. Clean the floor in the bathroom one.**  
Current status -- Implemented. The bathroom floor was professionally cleaned and is routinely cleaned daily by staff.

- h. Replace all the bedroom dressers, the lamp shade, mattress and window screen in the bedroom three.**

Current status –Implemented. The lamp shade was removed, a new mattress purchased, new window screens purchased, and new dressers will be bought by October 31, 2007.

- i. Replace the weight bench.**

Current status – Not implemented, but the weight bench will be removed or replaced by October 31, 2007.

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.*

## **II. Program Services**

- 2. Touch A Life management include placement workers as part of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Service Plans (NSPs).**

Current Status - Implemented. The Facility Manager contacted the probation officer of record. The facility managers routinely review each child's file. The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.

## **VII. Clothing and Allowance**

- 3. Touch A Life management encourages and assists children in creating and maintaining photo albums/ life books.**

Current Status - Implemented. Touch A Life staff does encourage and assist the children in creating and maintaining photo albums/ life books. Facility Managers will copy important personal documents and place them in a designated "life book" folder for the minors to keep upon emancipation from the program. The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.

**Touch A Life Foundation  
Touch A Life II Group Home  
Pomona, CA  
License Number: 191500237  
RCL: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**1. Touch A Life management:**

- a. **Landscape the backyard.**  
Current status – Partially implemented. Three large trees were trimmed down and branches hauled away. The gardener will fertilize and reseed the lawn by October 31, 2007. Staff will water the lawn on a regular basis.
- b. **Clean the kitchen stove.**  
Current status – Implemented. Staff thoroughly cleaned the stove. The Facility Managers will check on a regular basis that the stove remains clean.
- c. **Repair or replace the carpet in the den and bathtub.**  
Current status – Partially implemented. The bathtub was repainted. We have contacted a carpet repair company who will repair the carpet in the den by October 31, 2007.
- d. **Replace the shower faucet knob.**  
Current status – Implemented. A new shower facet knob was installed.
- e. **Replace the dressers in the bedrooms one and three.**  
Current status – Implemented. Three new dressers were purchased and one dresser placed in each bedroom.

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.*



## II. Program Services

2. Touch A Life management maintain current Needs and Service Plans for all children.

Current Status - Implemented. Needs and Service Plans are current. The Facility Managers as well as the treatment team members will review weekly with the counselor each child's case plan. The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.

## III. Educational and Emancipation Services

3. Touch A Life management provide children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Current Status - Implemented. The Facility Managers contacted each Probation Officer to request a referral for the Independent Living Program (ILP). The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.

## VII. Clothing and Allowance

4. Touch A Life management encourages and assists children in creating and maintaining photo albums/ life books.

Current Status - Implemented Touch A Life staff does encourage and assist the children in creating and maintaining photo albums/ life books. Facility Managers will copy important personal documents and place them in a designated "life book" folder for the minors to keep upon emancipation from the program. The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.

Ottie Wade   
Administrator/ Executive Director